

# Resources to Reach the Window: Will the Church Respond?

*We must be willing to make radical changes in our mission efforts in order to present the Gospel in a relational and culturally sensitive way in the darkest areas of the world. We all must ask ourselves the probing question: "Have we allocated people, resources, and finances properly, or have we squandered the gifts God has given us for reaching the lost on ourselves for our own pleasure?"*

by Beverly Pegues and Luis Bush

**A**t a University of Texas Medical Branch clinic, I (Beverly) was drawn to a wall where the UTMB's Mission Statement declared, "The mission of the UTMB is to provide scholarly teaching, innovative scientific investigation, and state of the art patient care. UTMB must lead in the discovery of new approaches to the prevention and treatment of disease and in the application of this new knowledge. This effort requires superior patient care programs in each of its clinical departments which will, in turn, nurture and support scholarly activities that underlie and nurture them."

As I read this, I thought, "This is the type of heart the Body of Christ should have. We must be devoted to our compassionate desire to reach the lost." If a secular institution has this much dedication to healing people of disease, how much more should the Church provide for those who are diagnosed as eternally terminal—unless we reach them.

We must be willing to make cutting-edge changes in our approach in order to present the Gospel in a relational and culturally sensitive way in the darkest areas of the world. Since we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16) and we have the Holy Spirit who searches out the things of God (1

Con 2:10) indwelling us (1 Cor. 3:16), we as God's people have access to heaven and all of its divine resources. Therefore, we must seek God for a release of His divine plan and purpose for the entire world (Isa. 14:24, 26).

Many people in the past have regarded the 10/40 Window nations as peoples who are resistant to the Gospel. However, mission researcher Dr. David Barrett, editor of *World Christian Encyclopedia*, has concluded that the 10/40 Window is spiritually responsive to the Gospel. Christianity's poor representation in the 10/40 Window, he says, stems not from the people's resistance but simply from their lack of exposure to the Good News.<sup>1</sup>

"Dollar for dollar and hour for hour, the harvest coming from the 10/40 Window nations outstrips that from the rest of the world 100 to 1," Barrett says. "That is, if the same money and time spent to win one person to the Lord in the West were put to use in the 10/40 Window nations, the effort would yield a harvest of 100 souls added to the kingdom of God. It is 100 times more cost effective, to reach those in the 10/40 Window."<sup>2</sup>

The Church worldwide will have to give an account to the Lord for the way we spend our resources, continuing to retell "the told" when there are

1.4 billion people in the 10/40 Window who have never heard the glorious Gospel one time, and in a culturally sensitive way in their own languages. Author Oswald J. Smith, former pastor of Peoples Church in Toronto, Canada, has said, "No one deserves to hear the Gospel twice while there are those who have yet to hear it once."

This is the probing question we must ask ourselves: "Have we allocated people, resources, and finances properly, or have we squandered the gifts God has given us for reaching the lost on ourselves and our own pleasure?"

## **Needed: Skilled Workers**

Directing our resources properly is all the more important in an age when completion of the Great Commission appears to be an attainable goal. As we face the 21st century, humankind boasts of greater technological advancement than at any other time in history. More knowledge than ever before is more readily available, especially on the Internet. Convenient transportation options abound. The Church enjoys enough wealth and finances to provide what is needed to bring the Good News to the 10/40 Window. Christianity claims more fol-

lowers than any other religion, including Islam. We therefore have the work force needed to finish the task.

Reaching the unreached of the 10/40 Window is possible. Secular business has proven this. Numerous businesses and franchises now stake a claim in the remotest parts of the world—Safeway, Chrysler Corporation, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, Burger King, Pizza Hut, and others. Coca-Cola, for example, is available in 200 countries. The business world has already taken its products into places that the Church has yet to penetrate with the Gospel.

These same businesses can serve as ministry vehicles for the Body of Christ. Believers with skills sought after by the business world can provide an important resource to the kingdom of God. Those who travel and live cross-culturally under the auspices of their regular job find an entree for the Gospel into otherwise resistant cultures and countries.

A recent conference I (Beverly) attended in Cyprus in the spring of 1998 included extensive discussion of "bi-vocational workers," also known as "tentmakers." One concern expressed was that when missionaries go on the field as tentmakers, their job-skill level might not attain a high enough standard. Excellence in the workplace wins favor and opens an avenue to share the Good News with co-workers. In other words, tentmakers may have strong spiritual skills, but weak job skills. If they have not made the necessary sacrifice to pursue excellence in their trade and gain the respect of their co-workers, tentmakers will be hindered in their witness to their colleagues, and perhaps even cast a bad light on other believers.

A different concern arises when bi-vocational workers who are high performers on the job isolate themselves from other believers in their

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country of ministry. Many do not associate with the local Body of Christ. When they forsake assembling together with other believers (Heb. 10:25), they become weak in their walk with the Lord.

### Discipleship of Workers

As a Church we need to disciple younger people, just as Jesus disciplined the Twelve, Moses disciplined Joshua, and Paul disciplined Timothy. The next generation presents a vast untapped bounty of skills and

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resources for the kingdom of God, both for bi-vocational work and full-time ministry. We must be dedicated to the discipleship of potential bi-vocational workers, encouraging them to pursue a deep relationship with the Lord. As we nurture them in their love for God and intimacy with Him, we can also pray for them as for our own children, desiring God's best for their lives. We can pray they would be compelled by the love of God to take the Good News to the spiritually dark places in the 10/40 Window. We need to instill in these bi-vocational workers (our spiritual children) a sense of the value of every human being created in the image of the invisible God. They can be reminded that it is

an honor, as they obediently follow God's direction for their lives, to use the knowledge and skills they have obtained from colleges and universities and on-the-job training among people who don't know the love of Jesus Christ.

God calls us to be willing to send our best and most brilliant men and women, both those highly skilled in business or other vocations and those gifted in the five-fold ministry. It is our responsibility to pray for these workers to retain the mind and heart of Christ as they labor among the lost. No matter how ungodly the people they serve may appear to be, each of us must remember that these people are precious to the Lord and deserve our love and compassion. The lost are not simply faceless people to be added to our spiritual "hit lists." Each group has unique value to God. They deserve to know that our caring heavenly father loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to rescue every single person on this planet from the ruthless grip of the devil.

### Tithing and Missions

Few of the Church's resources tend to provoke as much controversy as its finances. A sometimes not-so-silent majority feels uncomfortable whenever the Church begins to teach and speak about tithing. The Word of God is clear, as it declares in Malachi 3:10, that we are to tithe ten percent of the 100 percent of the first fruits (Prov. 3:9) that God gives us, and that the tithe is to go into the storehouse for the work of the Lord.

Over the past decade, the assets of the Church have grown enormously. Could it be that we have seen a tremendous growth in the wealth of the Church to prepare it for meeting its responsibly to fulfill the Great Commission? Increased income should be channeled to reach a ripe and burgeoning harvest field. The

concept of the “graduated tithe” recognizes that as our income rises, we have proportionately fewer real needs of our own. Thus we can and should give a greater percentage of our income to God’s work.

Annual giving to churches is tracked by *Giving USA*, a publication of the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel/Trust for Philanthropy.<sup>3</sup> In 1992 annual giving to North American churches or church-related activities totaled \$56.7 billion. Figures for giving in 1997 total an estimated \$66.26 billion.<sup>4</sup>

Statistics show an increase in the amount of giving; however, the percentage of income given by the majority of Christians has decreased. According to Ronald J. Sider, the percentage of income given has dropped from 3.14 percent in 1968 to 2.46 percent in 1995.<sup>5</sup> The New Testament is clear that giving to the Lord’s work should not be coerced; however, we are *compelled* to give out of love for the Savior.

Paul deals with the subject of giving in many of his epistles. In 2 Corinthians he says that giving should not be done grudgingly. Our giving should be done out of gratitude for what Christ has done for us: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might be made rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

How we spend our God-given resources is of paramount importance. We will all appear before the Lord one day to give an account of what we did while we were on earth. While Christians in the West live in relative luxury, the majority of the world’s population ekes out a living on less than US \$1.00 per day.<sup>6</sup> Can we honestly say that we are being good stewards of the riches God has given us? Each person must take an inventory of our expenditures. Billions

of people are perishing without the knowledge of Jesus Christ. A reallocation of our income can mean the difference between souls spending eternity apart from God, or spending it in His presence.

Is the North American Church using its resources in the best way possible? Our mandate to complete the Great Commission should compel us to implement strategic plans for using the riches that God has entrusted to us to reach the lost

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worldwide. The billions who have yet to hear the Good News ought to have first claim on the billions of dollars Christians give yearly.

### Helping Meet the Challenge

\* Examine your resources, your finances, time, and skills to see if they can be used more strategically to reach the 10/40 Window peoples who have never heard the Gospel of Christ.

\* Consider working as a tent-maker in areas closed to traditional mission. Disciple and encourage others toward bi-vocational ministry.

\* Take a prayer journey to intercede on site for unreached people groups.

\* Above all, seek God’s heart for the lost and perishing. Ask Him to motivate you with His love and compassion to do your part to fulfill the Great Commission.

\* Explore creative options for min-

istry in difficult situations. Let God expand your faith that He can reach even the most closed and hidden peoples.

\* If you are a Christian entrepreneur, investigate business opportunities in 10/40 Window countries. This will give you an opportunity to hire nationals and model the life of Christ in your business.

\* Continue to intercede daily for the move of the Holy Spirit in the peoples and countries of the 10/40 Window.

### Will We Respond to the Call?

“The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil” (Eccles. 12:13, 14).

Could these verses also apply to the Church using its finances, resources, and work force on those who have heard the Gospel message many times over?

This passage of Scripture applies to “every person”—including those in the Window. Yet they don’t know the love of our God. They don’t know they are supposed to worship God instead of demonic deities. They don’t know they should fear God. They haven’t been taught His commandments. Why? They don’t know, because the Church has neglected its responsibility to evangelize the peoples in the 10/40 Window.

This article is a clarion call to action. If we continue to ignore the spiritual cries of the people in the Window, we will have to answer to God.

Remember, for some unreached people groups, it is 1,000 times more effective to spend our mission finances and personnel on the lost in the 10/40 Window rather than on those already evangelized in the West-

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ern world. So reports research expert Dr. David Barrett, and continues to remind us, "It is outrageous for Christians to squander their limited evangelistic resources in heavily Christianized countries instead of the area where never-reached persons would hear the Good News for the first time."

"If we are to be good stewards of God's resources, doesn't it make sense to invest where the harvest is most plentiful? That is where we will see the greatest return for His kingdom."

These statements should resonate like God thunder from heaven, saying, "Wake up, Church, and direct your attention to the 10/40 Window. Now!"

In Matthew 24:14 it is clear that the Gospel must be preached in every nation before the end will come. The Gospel has not been preached to any measurable degree in the 10/40 Window. It is sobering to think that our disobedience could delay the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

James 4:17 explains it this way: "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." After reading this article, we can no longer enter a plea of ignorance or naiveté. We must channel laborers, finances, and resources immediately to the most spiritually needy area of the world—into the 10/40 Window countries and its unreached peoples.

### In Conclusion

We cannot stop praying and seeking God for the release of His sovereign plan for the Window. When His strategies are released, we must be obedient and respond quickly to saturate the Window with the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. If we don't, we will be judged according to Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 for our disobedience and misappropriation of God's finances and resources.

If our hearts are right, we can all find practical ways to do our part. Let's partner and join forces wherever we can to evangelize the Window. God may be calling you to labor hand-in-hand with ministries or people you never felt "called to" before. But if fulfilling the Great Commission is a "God idea"—one that comes from Him, not from us—we don't have to worry about who gets credit for completing the task. We simply have to lay aside our self-interests, pride, and competition in order to get the work done. That way, He gets all the honor and glory—not us.

Because of God's zeal for the lost dwelling in the Window countries, there is no question that the Holy Spirit will make Jesus Christ known. The question is, "Will we the Church of the Lord move in concert with Him and be yielded vessels that He will use?" God *does* have a plan to reach the peoples of the Window and He *will* accomplish this task by many or by few. Let's pray and fast, and seek God for the part each one of us is to play. Yes, all of us are responsible to reach the lost in our generation.

The wind of the Holy Spirit is moving in the 10/40 Window in an unprecedented way. The Lord desperately loves the precious lost ones. Let us join with the Holy Spirit of God to move methodically, effectively, and powerfully in the Window to introduce its inhabitants to Jesus Christ!

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48).

### Endnotes

1. David Barrett, phone interview with Luis Bush, 23 December 1997.
2. Same phone interview of David Barrett with Luis Bush, 23 December 1997.
3. John and Sylvia Ronsvalle, *The*

*Christian Century*, 3 June 1998, p. 579.

4. John and Sylvia Ronsvalle, *The Christian Century* June 1998, p. 58.
5. Ronald J. Sider, President of Evangelicals for Social Action, *Charisma Magazine*, December 1998, p. 5.
6. *Ibid.*



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